

VZCZCXRO6983
RR RUEHAO RUEHGR
DE RUEHSJ #2834 3632342
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 292342Z DEC 06
FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
TO RUEHDG/AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO 1502
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6916
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0791
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO 3846
RUEHBH/AMEMBASSY NASSAU 0252
RUEHWN/AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN 0747
RUEHPU/AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE 0558
RUEHGE/AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN 0423
RUEHGR/AMEMBASSY GRENADA 0014
RUEHKG/AMEMBASSY KINGSTON 0767
RUEHPO/AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO 0330
RUEHSP/AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN 0456
RUEHAO/AMCONSUL CURACAO 0068
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA 0032

UNCLAS SAN JOSE 002834

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR OES/PCI (LSPERLING) AND OES/OMC (WGIBBONS-FLY) STATE FOR
OES/ETC (RWING) AND OES/ENV
SANTO DOMINGO FOR CDAVY AND OPEREZ
EL SALVADOR FOR GSCHADRACK AND AID (ADIX)
NOAA FISHERIES FOR NDAVES

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SENV](#) [EFIS](#) [PGOV](#) [DR](#)

SUBJECT: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: MARINE RESOURCES VICE MINISTER FLAGS
FISHERIES REFORM, HAWKESBILL SMUGGLING

¶1. SUMMARY. While meeting with the Dominican Vice Minister for Coastal and Marine Resources Idalia Acevedo on November 17, NOAA officer Nancy Daves and REO discussed fisheries-related CAFTA-DR environmental capacity-building projects, fisheries law reform, and the illegal trade in hawksbill turtle shell products. END SUMMARY.

¶2. On Friday, November 17, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries Officer Nancy Daves and REO met with the Environment Secretariat's Vice Minister for Coastal and Marine Resources Idalia Acevedo and newly appointed Fisheries Director Jeannette Mateo. Daves briefed the Vice Minister on the four NOAA fisheries projects that will be undertaken in 2007 with Central America-Dominican Republic-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR) environment capacity-building funds. Although the Dominican Republic has no long-line fishing fleet, the Vice Minister hoped that Dominican fisheries officials would be able to participate in the training. Mateo told Daves that she was particularly interested in a future opportunity to promote the use of vessel monitoring systems among the Dominican fishing fleet. REO encouraged the Dominican officials to communicate any further project ideas to GODR CAFTA-DR points of contact as the planning for 2007 projects gets underway.

¶3. Although the Dominican Republic recently implemented a new fisheries law, further legislation is being contemplated to fix its flaws. The Assembly amended the law to vest complete responsibility for science and fisheries management in an entity whose chief mandate is to promote fisheries production. That entity and the Ministry of Environment successfully worked out a division of responsibilities that, they hope, will be enshrined in further legislation. The Vice Minister lamented the lack of interest in fisheries enforcement by necessary partners like the Navy, Customs and Judiciary. She hoped to find a suitable opportunity to bring together the range of partners needed to tighten law enforcement on issues beyond the drug trade. REO suggested sounding out the Embassy on its degree of interest in using its convocational influence to convene such a meeting in conjunction with an appropriate event.

¶4. REO noted the dismay with which many members of the U.S. delegation to the November 13-17 CAFTA-DR environment capacity-building project presentations viewed the unexpected availability of CITES-listed carey (hawksbill sea turtles) jewelry and handicrafts to foreign tourists at the international airport and high-end and low-end souvenir stores. Some of the vendors recognized that international trade in this substance is prohibited under CITES, but pointed out that it was easy to bring home the items undetected. The Vice Minister said that efforts to enforce the law were undercut by the past failure to monitor grandfathered stocks of carey shells, which made it impossible to determine whether items were illegal or not. She believed that the quantity of carey sold in the Dominican Republic greatly exceeded the amount that could be procured through fishing in Dominican waters. With no approvals for its import being granted, she surmised that carey was being smuggled into the Dominican Republic through Haiti from an unknown source. She nodded when REO responded by observing that Cuba claims to have a particularly healthy carey population.

¶5. Daves suggested that it might be possible for the U.S., GODR, cruise ship industry and environmental non-government organizations (NGOs) to collaborate on an outreach campaign to inform visiting tourists that the import of carey products into the United States is illegal. Vice Minister Acevedo indicated interest in the proposal. Daves undertook to raise the issue with U.S. NGOs and will contact Post and USAID contacts with additional information as progress is made.

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